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**From:** Tom Smyth [tjsmyth6@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 22, 2009 12:54 PM  
**To:**  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Council Meeting Testimony Bill 16 (2009) CD2 FD1

Aloha Chair Apo and Members of the City Council:

I am **Tom Smyth**, a Member of the Downtown Neighborhood Board, but offering written testimony today as an **individual**, on that portion of **Bill 16 (2009) CD2, FD1, (Versions A and B)** relating to the Capital Budget Project for the **River Street Residences**.

**I very strongly support this important, timely and cost effective project** that will go far in helping us in the Downtown and Chinatown neighborhoods better deal with the growing problem of homelessness. With the necessary closing of public beaches and parks to prevent those who have chosen to erect nearly permanent shelters on space that belongs to all of us, there have been more homeless persons coming into our urban neighborhood. When those numbers are added to the likely newly homeless, suffering from the effects of our economic downturn, the problem has grown far beyond anything I have seen in the 35 years I have lived in Honolulu.

This project, well sited on city-owned land, away from other residences and stores, will go far in reducing the number of individuals and even families with young children, who now often sleep in storefront entrances or other niches, where they frequently create a public nuisance and drive customers from stores.

Some, even those whose businesses are negatively affected by the present lack of supportive housing, say that creating such a relatively secure and semi-permanent housing facility will increase crime in the immediate area of the project. On the contrary, **after the residence is opened and tenants screened, that location will become the safest area in our entire neighborhood.** It was clear at the recent community meeting on this project that many of our friends and neighbors support it. Those opposing the project offer no other suitable alternative program or location. We know from many years of experience on the Mainland that Housing First programs are effective. It will be effective here.

The non-profit entity that will operate the residence will provide security personnel, cameras, ample lighting and other crime preventive measures that will insure the safety of both residents and passersby. **The current run-down retail and small office building at the proposed location is an active crime scene now.** Prostitution, drug-dealing and other risky behavior happens every day and night. **It will become more, not less safe with the residence in place.**

**Please Support this important and very needed capital project. Funding is available and since the City owns the land, it is far more affordable than any other location in our Neighborhood.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Tom Smyth  
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